

'Doing Business with Lake County'

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Q. **What types of items and services does Lake County purchase?**

A. Lake County purchases a wide variety of equipment, supplies, services and professional services. For example, we purchase automobiles, snow plows, food, chemicals, motor fuel, laboratory, office and hospital supplies. We need auditors, dentists, doctors and engineers. We also purchase mobile radios, mower repair service, moving service, and grounds keeping, naming a few.

2. Q. **I am interested in doing business with Lake County. What should I do first?**

A. You should visit the County's website at www.lakecountyiil.gov and register to receive email notifications of solicitations in your area of interest.

3. Q. **Why should I register as a vendor with Lake County?**

A. The Purchasing Division uses the registration list to notify you when the County issues a sealed bid, Request for Proposal, or other solicitation for goods and services. When solicitations are issued for the commodity groups that you have registered for, we will send you an email notice advising you that a bid has been issued. You will be directed to the Lake County website where you can review the bid and print a copy.

4. Q. **Does Lake County give preference to firms located in the county?**

A. State law governs purchases made by Lake County. The law prohibits establishing a local preference as a determining factor in the award of sealed bids and Requests for Proposals. Nonetheless, we recognize that keeping tax dollars local is an investment in the community and encourage locally owned businesses to inform themselves of how to do business with Lake County.

5. Q. **Why do some departments purchase their own orders, and others are placed by the Purchasing Division?**

A. Generally, purchases less than \$5,000 are authorized by the department that uses the goods for efficiency. Departments authorize these "small dollar" purchases by a purchase order or a County credit card (P-Card).

Transactions between \$5,000 and \$30,000 are generally made on the basis of three written quotes and are placed by the Purchasing Division.

Transactions greater than \$30,000 are subject to competitive bid or competitive proposal process. The Purchasing Division issues these purchase orders based upon agreed terms.

6. Q. **What is the best way to communicate with Lake County?**

A. Email: Purchasing@lakecountyiil.gov
Fax: 847-984-5889
Phone: 847-377-2929

7. Q. **When can I expect payment for goods delivered?**

A. Lake County pays within 30 days and follows the Local Government Prompt Payment Act.

8. Q. **Will Lake County pay in advance or provide partial or progress payments?**

A. Generally, Lake County pays in full upon completion of the order and delivery acceptance. Partial payments may be made based on partial shipments, and progress payments may be negotiated.

9. Q. **Does Lake County require bid bonds, performance bonds and *Certificates of Insurance*?**

A. Bonds are required by state law for most construction. Insurance certification is a requirement in certain service contracts, particularly when services are performed on County property. We communicate specific details in our bid and purchase order documents.

10. Q. **What is the difference between a *Request for Quote* and an *Invitation to Bid*?**

A. A written quote is usually requested to document the price and terms of purchase for orders under \$30,000. Quotes will request pricing and terms based on written specifications or a specific product.

An Invitation to Bid is issued in a formal, sealed bid process for requirements greater than \$30,000. Bids are advertised in the News Sun, posted to the Lake County website and sent to all prospective bidders who have registered. The bid document communicates the requirement, specifications, terms, date due and often include a scheduled pre-bid informational meeting to answer questions. Bids are received sealed and remain sealed until the date and time due, as specified in the document. They are opened in a public meeting where pricing is read aloud. Bidders are invited to attend bid openings to learn the results of the bid.

A variation on the bid is the Request for Proposal (RFP). A RFP is used when the competitive sealed bidding process is neither practical nor advantageous. Competitive Sealed Proposals are administered in the same manner as bids except proposals are not publicly opened and the register of proposals is available for public inspection only after contract execution. Discussion and revision of proposals may be permitted after submissions and prior to award for the purpose of obtaining best and final offers.

11. Q. **When are contractors required to pay *Prevailing Wages*?**

A. The Illinois Prevailing Wage Act provides that no less than the general prevailing hourly rate be paid to all laborers, workers and mechanics employed by or on behalf of any and all public bodies engaged in public works.

Lake County consults with the Illinois Department of Labor to determine the applicability of this Act to County purchase requirements on a case by case basis. When applicable, complete information is communicated in our bids, purchase orders and contracts.